

# WIRETAP INQUIRY FINDS A PATTERN

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Senate Panel Learns Phone  
Company Assists Agents

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KANSAS CITY, Mo., Oct. 23 — Senate hearings here this week revealed a pattern of telephone company cooperation with Federal and local law enforcement agencies in tapping private phones.

Senator Edward V. Long expressed alarm and said the practice constituted "a great danger to the citizens of this country."

The Missouri Democrat heads the subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The panel's three days of hearings here continued an investigation into invasions of privacy that was begun this summer in Washington and Miami.

Arthur S. Brewster, security supervisor for the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company here, testified that he had provided the Kansas City Police Department with the information necessary to tap a phone whenever it was requested by Maj. James R. Newman, chief of detectives.

He said he had relied on Major Newman to judge whether a case warranted eavesdropping.

## Special Lines Installed

Mr. Brewster also listed several occasions in the last four years when special lines were installed from the Kansas City office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to places of business, homes and apartments.

With this assistance, the telephone company executive said, the F.B.I. then did the tapping.

He said he understood that only the lines of persons suspected of crime were tapped.

Senator Long responded that such snooping smacked of police state tactics.

He asked if the witness, who had been subpoenaed to appear, knew that the F.B.I. sometimes

used the special lines to help Internal Revenue Service agents eavesdrop on taxpayers.

Mr. Brewster said the Internal Revenue Service had never asked him for assistance in wiretapping.

Senator Long asked if the company's policy would not cause apprehension among all its customers that their phones might be tapped.

Mr. Brewster acknowledged that it might.

A private detective testified that it was not difficult to learn, presumably from company employes, the necessary cable and pair numbers to tap a phone.

## Banned by Federal Law

"What is the going rate?" Senator Long asked.

"Fifty to \$100," replied George W. Diamond, the private investigator. "It all depends on the man's attitude when you make a contact."

Missouri has no law against wiretapping, but the Federal Government has had one for 31 years. Federal agencies are under departmental orders not to tap telephones except in cases involving national security.

After the Long subcommittee began uncovering infractions, particularly in the Internal Revenue Service, President Johnson restated this summer his ban on the practice.

As a result of the hearings, Tax Commissioner Sheldon S. Cohen has started an interdepartmental investigation. He has warned that use of wiretaps or electronic eavesdropping devices by overzealous agents could bring dismissal from the Internal Revenue Service.

Two Kansas City agents, Everett W. Trost and Lawrence B. Bennett, testified under close questioning that they had persuaded a Kansas City landlord to put an electronic listening device under a tenant's couch while the agents kept a lookout lest the tenant return.

## Heard Intimate Talk

Then they took turns manning earphones and a tape recorder in the adjoining apartment for a week. They heard the tenant's private nighttime conversations with a woman, but nothing that warranted prosecution, and the case was dropped.

"You had no hesitancy in arranging for a bug to be placed?" Senator Long asked.

"No," Mr. Bennett replied. "Why didn't you place it yourself, then?" the Senator asked.

"That would be trespass," he was told.

Mr. Trost said a United States attorney had advised that placing a "bug" was "a gray area" legally at the time it was done.

"It would be rather dark gray," the Senator responded. "to break into a man's home."

The Senator said that the investigation was intended to make sure the constitutional guarantee against unreasonable search and seizure was not slipping into jeopardy.

The Missourian said that the hearings, to be continued in other cities, would lead to legislation restricting invasions of privacy. **END**